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New work rule bad for local police

Posted by Jackson Citizen Patriot October 07, 2008 08:56AM

Categories: Editorial

The following is a Jackson Citizen Patriot editorial for October 7:

Jackson County voters this year showed support for two local police departments, approving millages to preserve the Parma-Sandstone and Springport forces. Now comes another threat to the idea of local policing: an administrative rule that could knock many part-time officers off the streets. The state body that approved this change needs to think again.

Issue

A new rule would force all police officers to work at least 520 hours a year.

Our Say

This harmless-sounding rule would hurt local police departments.

This rule change probably would sideline former full-time officers who now are retired or work another job. Those people have experience and ability, but can devote only so much time to policing.

And if they were willing to work 520 hours a year, local police chiefs in many cases would have to find more work for them to do. In a time of tight budgets, that might not be possible.

This state commission rightly should insist that police officers meet certain standards, but there are other ways to accomplish that goal. It could require that all officers go through a set amount of regular training, or that they can pass skills tests. What matters is that they can do the job.

Some local police chiefs are urging the commission to reverse course before this rule takes effect in 2012. And who can blame them? They know what is best for their communities — and this rule puts qualified officers out of commission.

— Jackson Citizen Patriot

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Posted by **danielle** on 10/07/08 at 9:53AM

What was the entire text of the ruling? Was there a method to ask for exemptions?

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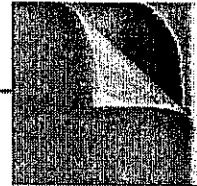
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Posted by **geek49203** on 10/07/08 at 10:44AM

I smell either Federal mandate, or some standards agency pronouncement, behind all of this.

EDITORIAL: State must block new parttime officer rule

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Daily Telegram
Sun Nov 09, 2008, 10:30 AM EST

ADRIAN, Mich. -

Township and municipal governments have struggled for years with the state — and worldwide — economic crisis while striving to balance budgets yet also keep residents safe. Woodstock Township had to disband its police force and, for financial reasons, has not re-established it. The Morenci, Clinton and local township departments, among others, rely on part-time officers to maintain safety.

So a new, recent rule by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) that would reduce the use of part-time officers seems particularly out of touch. The rule, slated to take effect in 2012, would require officers to work 520 hours per year.

Many departments traditionally have relied on retired or other part-time officers to fill in when uniformed law enforcement is needed due to vacations, sick time, parades and special events. Hiring more full-time officers has financially never been an option, and is especially not one now.

Morenci Police Chief Larry Weeks told the county's criminal justice committee last week that the new rule would probably force his department to lay off two officers. Similar scenarios were presented by Clinton Police Chief Michael Randolph and Columbia Township Police Chief David Elwell. Adrian Police Chief Terry Collins said smaller departments losing staff eventually would affect his force as well.

We can see one justification. State law defines police officers as "regularly employed." For 43 years, however, it hasn't specified what "regularly employed" means. That's an oversight that could be corrected, but we should remember the system has worked well during the past four decades.

Idaho is the only state in the U.S. that has a minimum number of required hours, according to Elwell, and its threshold is only 120 hours. It makes little sense that MCOLES chose a figure more than four times greater. The real emphasis should be on qualifications and training, not on how many hours a person works.

If MCOLES will not rescind its rule immediately, before the 2012 deadline, it is vital that state lawmakers find a way to set up their own stop sign.



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Measure may trim number of officers

 Posted by [Whitney Stewart](#) | For the [Citizen Patriot](#) September 29, 2006 10:30AM
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By Nick Dentemaro | Jackson Citizen Patriot

Part-time officer Ted Ahlers patrols the streets Sunday morning. Ahlers has been working at the Columbia Township Police Department after working 15 years in Jackson. The Consumers Energy employee works two days a month as an officer for Columbia Township.

Township residents in the state may see fewer patrols when a new policy takes effect, some police chiefs of smaller departments fear.

The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) passed a measure in April defining a decades-old act requiring licensed officers remain "regularly employed." Beginning in 2012, the updated statute will require officers to work 520 hours per year.

Police chiefs of some smaller communities say the new standard would require them to increase work hours for part-time officers. And budget increases resulting from more hours on the payroll might mean some departments slash hours — and officers — from their patrol schedules.

"We won't be able to maintain our part-time officers," said Columbia Township Police Chief David Elwell. "Many small departments are not going to be in a position to hire."

Local law enforcement may call on state and county police — who might not receive extra funding, either — to help fill the gaps, he said.

"It's probably the worst time in the world to mandate something like this because people just don't have the money," said Police Chief Michael Randolph of Lenawee County's Clinton village. He employs four full-time and five part-time officers and would have to fire three of his part-time officers to afford the MCOLES rule.

MCOLES commissioners made the move after a two-year study of police officer employment standards, MCOLES spokesman David King said. Previous commissions relied on judicial precedent and attorney general opinions to guide them in defining regular employment. Although there had been some discussion to further define it, the current commissioners decided to legally put numbers to the term this year.

"It's the extreme cases — the cases of people working very few hours in a year — that has pushed the commission into this spot where they felt they had to take some kind of action," King said.

"At the heart of this thing is a law that this commission has to ensure that officers are regularly employed. Period. It doesn't say trained."

The challenge facing small departments lies in keeping their officers, Elwell said. Young police academy graduates require a few months of on-the-job training and often move to bigger departments in fewer than two years.

So to save money and retain officers, chiefs usually hire people with previous experience in law enforcement who are retired or work another full-time job and don't require months of training, he said.

But the statute would require part-time officers to increase their work time to 43 hours per month — an impractical requirement for anyone working full-time somewhere else, Elwell said.

King said the commission wanted to ensure high-quality performance among officers.

"It all comes down to when you or your family members or your loved ones need help, having a person with a requisite amount of training and experience showing up at the door," he said.

The chiefs in Jackson and Lenawee counties pool funds to host a training consortium providing up to 40 hours of ongoing training for officers every year. Elwell said MCOLES would do better to focus on setting standards for similar in-service training than to set a minimum work-hour standard.

In Waterloo Township, where the local police force offers 20 hours of police protection a day and consists of two full-time and six reserve officers, Chief Tom Cottrell said liability concerns motivate him to hire excellent officers more than a state work standard would.

And he said cutting local police forces and filling the shortages with state or county police services wouldn't help the community.

"The advantage of a local department like mine is, I know the people of the community," he said. "We know what's going on here. That's where the key to this whole thing is. Local control is very important to local effectiveness."

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Posted by [cufflink](#) on [09/29/08 at 1:54PM](#)

To have a officer like Ted Ahlers on your smaller dept. is a good thing. Officers like Ted bring so much to a smaller department. I wonder if the MCOLES board consists of to many Sheriffs from the state of Michigan that want to contract with the small townships to supplement there own county dept. budgets and push townships out of the way. My question is then why run a police academy when they know 60% of the recruits will be part time anyway. I think there is more to it then the MCOLES board having a worry about hours worked and that a guy showing up at your door who has experience. Ted along with other former police officers who may have retired or took another job still want to be police officers and can't give it up and want to be involved in there community. Tom Williams a former Jackson City cop works for Parma and Howard Noppe another former Jackson City cop that works for Spring Arbor bring valuable experience and people skills that you would want out on the street. Before MCOLES has a worry about hours worked they should worry more about officers big bellies, weight, over all health and the trouble they have getting out of there patrol cars after they leave there academy. I hope village and township chiefs fight this MCOLES board on this matter.

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Posted by [kthoughts](#) on [09/29/08 at 3:03PM](#)

I'm hoping that the legislature will step in and bring some sense to this. Having an unelected group of "commissions" mandate something with such far-ranging community police protection and economic implications is ludicrous.

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Posted by [NapMom](#) on [09/29/08 at 3:26PM](#)

Lets see here.....more disabled people driving and/or walking/rolling because they no longer have free transportation...plus...fewer police officers.

In the news

Relay for Life plans to combine events

In 2008 Relay for Life branched out into three separate events with Lenawee Northeast activities taking place in Tecumseh. This coming summer, there will be a Lenawee Community Relay for Life "Reunion" at the Christian Family Centre in Adrian from 3 p.m. August 7 until 3 p.m. August 8. This will be the only Relay site in the county and will celebrate 25 years of American Cancer Society Relay for Life in America. The group believes by joining forces it will help teams bond and save on expenses incurred by holding individual events. The local organization also will promote a Mini-Relay Program in the schools and colleges in Lenawee County during the coming year.

Auditions coming up for 'My Fair Lady'

TYT will be holding auditions for the 2009 High School Spring Musical "My Fair Lady" on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 24 and 25, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Tecumseh Middle School band room. Auditioners should come with 16-32 bars of music prepared to sing. Readings will also be required. Any student attending Tecumseh High School or of high school age being home-schooled in the Tecumseh school district is eligible to participate in the audition.

Holiday schedules for trash pickup

During the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, there will be regularly scheduled Wednesday pickup of waste (also known as post) ENDS after the second week in December, with 10 being the last yard waste pickup until March 4, 2009. There are five Wednesdays in December so Wednesday, Dec. 31, will only be trash pickup for the city. Allied Waste is working on New Year's Eve.

Planning begins 2009 After Prom

There will be a meeting to plan the 2009 After Prom on Monday, Nov. 24, at 6 p.m., at the Tecumseh Public Library. Any Tecumseh School student or parent is welcome to attend. The committee needs help to keep this safe, fun-filled tradition going.

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The Tecumseh Herald

LENAAWEE COUNTY'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER • SINCE 1850



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Comedy and laughs will fill the Tecumseh Center for the Arts stage this weekend with the presentation of Arsenic & Old Lace. The play, presented by Tecumseh Youth Theatre, is a classic comedy about a young drama critic who visits the home of his two spinster aunts. While there he finds that the two dear, sweet ladies have embarked on what they see as their mission of mercy ... killing lonely old men. Arsenic & Old Lace is the first show of the TYT season and features area high-school students on stage. Performances are: Nov. 21-22 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 23 at 3 p.m. Pictured above are TYT players (front, l-r) Andrew Tibbels and Chloe Obeld, (middle) Shelley Reinhard, and (back) two other players.

Local police chiefs rally to oppose new employment standards

By CRISTINA TRAPANI-SCOTT
cristina@tecumsehherald.com

Local police chiefs and their associated municipalities are voicing opposition to the Michigan Coalition of Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) move to define "regular employment" standards as a minimum of 520 hours under Public Act 203. The act, which was passed in 1965, defines standards for police officers to maintain certification, and law enforcement officials from small communities are saying the hourly regulation is too restrictive.

Clinton Police Chief Michael Randolph,

Chief Larry Weeks of Morenci and Chief Dave Elwell of Columbia are leading the effort to organize data and continue discussion on the potential hardships facing smaller agencies when MCOLES begins enforcing the regular employment standard in 2012. Their hope is to generate discussion among state chiefs at the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police mid-winter conference in February. "We think we need this discussed a bit more," Randolph said and Weeks agrees.

The measure to define regular employment passed after a series of public hearings were

SEE CHIEFS RALLY PAGE 11A

Evian affiliate seeks approval for bottling plant in Raisin Twp.

■ Raisin Township Board to consider waiver for potential bottling business

By DEB WUETHRICH
deb@tecumsehherald.com

The Raisin Township Board of Trustees soon will be considering a request by Can Am Bottling, which is affiliated with Evian, for a waiver to take water off a site on Rogers Highway near Comfort Enterprises, Raisin Township Supervisor Carl Wagner said that the company wants to put up a bottling plant to bottle, remove and sell water. The request came before the board at its November 10 meeting, but was tabled.

"We just felt that we needed more hydrology information," said Wagner. "Our biggest concern is that we don't want to

impact someone else's well. That's something we really want to look at and make sure we're doing the right thing."

Wagner said he expected the company to provide more information prior to the township's December 8 meeting. If the board grants the waiver, the company then would have to go through the site planning process and other steps before the Raisin Township Planning Commission.

The company proposes to build a 975-square-foot plant with two 1,500 square-foot offices. With approval, a well would be drilled for the company to draw 125 gallons of water per minute to be bottled and create 11-15 new jobs.

Economy leads city to tighten budget as planning begins

City Manager says precautionary steps need for next year's budget planning process

By DEB WUETHRICH
deb@tecumsehherald.com

Tecumseh City Manager Kevin Welch outlined some of the city's budget planning process at Monday night's Tecumseh City Council Study Session that could be taken to keep the city's budget stable in the wake of an uncertain economic future. Welch said he didn't mean to paint a dark picture, because he doesn't really know what the future holds. He said the council members should be aware of the budgeting process and issues that might be coming before them in the near future. "We've been here before and have

had to cut back. I think this is probably one of the worst economic times we have ever faced, but the types of things we may have to consider here are not that unusual," he said.

Using a five-year projection as a tool, Welch noted that Tecumseh is still in a better position than many other com-

SEE BUDGET PAGE 11A

Geigers make final plea for mascot change

By CRISTINA TRAPANI-SCOTT
cristina@tecumsehherald.com

CLINTON — Clinton High School graduates Elspeth and Kylieta Geiger gave a final plea to Clinton Board of Education members to change the school's mascot during the public comment portion of the regular meeting held Monday. "I want to focus specifically on how it creates disrespect for the people it's supposed to be honoring," Elspeth told the board as she read to them of how the origin of the adoption of Native American names as mascots was not done to honor Native Americans, but came as a result of stereotypical images propagated from movies and stories of non-native origin. Kylieta followed her sister in

making a final argument, saying the use of the mascot is discriminatory and over-simplifies the meaning behind the names.

Both women, who are of Native-American descent, began a petition drive in early October in hopes of getting the mascot issue before the board. Supt. David Pray gave the Geiger sisters the petition stipulating that 40 percent of the signatures needed to be in favor of changing the mascot name in order for it to be placed on the board agenda at the November regular meeting. The petition signatures, tallied earlier this month, showed more than 90 percent in favor of keeping Redskin as Clinton Community Schools mascot.

The Geigers were not alone

in their plea, however. Several members of various tribes attended the meeting to speak out on how the name disrespects

their heritage. Marsha Traxler was the first to speak, telling the board members that Native Americans were forced out of

the area at one time, long ago, and those who stayed were

SEE MASCOT PAGE 11A



PHOTO BY MICKEY ALVAREDO

Elspeth Geiger addresses the Clinton School Board regarding the Redskins mascot.

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BUDGET FROM PAGE 1A

Economic uncertainties leads city to tighten budget

munities in the state, with some facing the layoff of city workers and having to cut services. "The good news is we are responding to the issues," he said. "I feel like we are being precautionary rather than responding to problems after they happen."

He said even with the tough economic times, the city was able to show revenues over expenses of \$143,085 in Fiscal year 2007-2008, with funds added to the fund balance. Welch and his staff are in the process of tightening up the current year's budget. Some things that have impacted the city's budget include the downturn in the housing market and the fact that Tecumseh Products left the city, removing a chunk of personal property, along with the continuing decline in state revenue sharing, less reimbursement from the state for local and major highways and other factors. Given that reduced revenues are likely to continue, the city expects to proceed cautiously, paring expenses wherever possible.

Welch said with a goal of maintaining at least a 15-20 percent Fund Balance and not cutting services, some of the things that the city will face could include the following:

- The funding of very few capital improvement projects in 2009-2010 and possibly 2010-

2011. Welch said the biggest impact will be on the street programs.

- Departments will need to have another year of flat budgets, which is especially difficult for areas such as the Police Department where most of the budget is for salaries.

- Looking for ways to reduce the current budget by 1-2 percent.

- Limiting equipment purchases for next year, the use of some part-time staff, and cutting back on some discretionary spending.

- Using part of the fund balance in years where expenses exceed revenues, although Welch hopes to avoid this scenario.

- Seeking new sources of revenue to help offset reductions in revenues.

Each year the city has attempted to dedicate approximately \$250,000 for roadwork, using in-house and contracted services. Some projects have been completed through federal grants, but such funding can't always be relied upon. Welch said the city needs to do what it can to extend the life of streets, because if they deteriorate, it can cost three to four times more to replace them. While the economy has impacted the sewer and water funds with tap fees and sales volumes down,

Welch suggested that rates not be raised at the present time. "We can take a look at these funds later in 2009 and see if an adjustment is needed or not," he said.

"The budgets for the next few years will need to be very conservative," said Welch. "It is too early to predict too far in advance, but I would rather be too cautious at this point. The bottom line is that we will manage this."

At the Study Session, the council members also heard a report from Tecumseh Police Chief Mark Hann and Department of Public Works Engineering Assistant Kathy Righier regarding a speed study that would soon come before council in the form of new traffic control orders that will raise the speed limit on some Tecumseh streets. Craig Riegler, Brookside Cemetery Superintendent, also updated the council on a coming request to amend an ordinance to close Brookside from dusk until 5 a.m. daily and also to strengthen enforcement on the no pets rule by amending the ordinance. Righier also pointed out a growing concern regarding parents who wait in the cemetery, including pulling over on the grass, for students who are getting out of school. Discussion included exploring the possibil-

ity of erecting some type of high fencing between Brookside and the school property, especially if a sports complex goes in there, to discourage parking in the cemetery.

During the regular business meeting at 7:30 p.m.:

- Tecumseh City Clerk Laura Caterina swore in Mayor Harvey Schmidt, Jack Baker, Gary Naugle and Troy Wright for their new terms of office on the council.

- Auditor Mark Kettner of

Rehmann Robson gave the city a "clean, unqualified opinion" on the city's 2007-2008 budget. "I know this city has been pretty good about tightening its budget and being efficient with its money," Kettner said.

- Welch shared news of a \$25,000 donation from the Sage Foundation for the Tecumseh Civic Auditorium toward operating expenses.

- Welch outlined continuing efforts toward infrastructure improvements on the Business

and Technology campus; and reported that Consolidated Biscuit Company is ready to begin Phase 2 work as part of their 120-day due diligence process.

- Council members authorized the city to charge a fee of \$50 beginning December 1, 2008, \$100 effective July 1, 2009, and \$150 effective January 1, 2010, to install, maintain and remove banners spanning M-50 (W. Chicago Boulevard).



City Clerk Laura Caterina, left, conducted a swearing-in ceremony at Monday's city council meeting. Taking the oath, l-r, were: Mayor Harvey Schmidt and councilmen Gary Naugle, Troy Wright and Jack Baker. Baker will serve as mayor pro tem.

MASCOT FROM PAGE 1A

Clinton sisters make plea to end Redskins mascot at CHS

forced to mask their identity fearing for their lives. "My guess is the people who signed the petition don't understand that these people live among us," she said. She also told listeners of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, adopted in 1978, and how that marked the start of when Native Americans could pray openly in this country, a country founded on principles of religious freedom, she reminded board members.

Christine Herdman, who is Mohawk, referred to Indian mascots when she said, "These things keep us stuck in the past. Our kids look at these and think, 'jeez, this is what they think of us, of our ancestors.'" She said that the term Redskin, which she added is a term she

and violence and urged the board to take another look at changing the name.

North American Indian Association of Detroit Vice President Andrea Pierce commented, stating 12 Michigan tribes have passed resolutions that consider the use of Indian names by schools and professional sports teams as discriminatory and promoting stereotypes rather than honoring the history of Native Americans in Michigan. She was followed by former Eastern Michigan University sociology professor Karen Sherman who noted several resolutions adopted by governmental bodies that condemn the use of Native American names as mascots, but she highlighted the 2003 State of Michigan Board of Education

use Native American names for logos. The result of the study was a resolution urging schools to eliminate culturally associated logos or mascots. This also was the resolution the Geiger sisters cited as a reason for initiating the petition drive at Clinton. "It is time for Clinton schools to do a self-assessment and a checklist," said Sherman. "Schools should not use their influence to perpetuate stereotypes of any group."

Rose Johnson, a Comanche, Aztec and Apache, urged the board members to listen not with their ears but with their hearts. "You choose to honor my people with a funny looking Indian guy. At least use a true representation," she said. She said she did not feel honored by the name Redskin. "I'm just saying if you

Linda Crypet-Kilbourne, of Marshall, addressed the board using her Native American name Zhaawanaag Ninkiki Kwee (Southern Thunder Woman). She told board members that the district will never qualify for Michigan's Blue Ribbon Exemplary Schools Program, even with its many academic accomplishments, strictly because it chooses to keep the name Redskin. Beyond the practical aspect of the school's choice, she noted, as did others, the hurtful nature of the mascot name and hoped the board members would use education as a tool for honoring the Native American people. "Education is the way. We all need to be educated on many different levels with many different people," she said.

name and in support of the way that Pray has handled the controversy after commenting on the school's advance placement program. 1989 Clinton High School graduate Shawn Phillips, a Chippewa, chose not to speak during public comment, although, he and his brother, Jeremy, who could not make the meeting because of recent surgery, have supported the district's decision to keep the name. "I'm not offended at all by it. I did do a lot of research. I've mentioned it to other Indians in conversations and haven't found any who take offense to it," he said following the meeting.

Not present at the meeting were representatives from the local organization Lehi-Nah-Wah Native American Organization based in Lenawee

action, but Pray remained firm on putting the issue to rest, stating that petitions show the community supports keeping the mascot and logo. "The reason why we issued the petition is because in 2003 the school board made a decision to say they were not going to change the mascot without input from the community. Community members came forward later saying they would have liked input. Our community is very strong on the issue," he said. He added that he understood the view of the people who spoke, but the community supports keeping the name.

Elspeth Geiger said, however, that the issue is not over. "We really need to all get together and discuss where we go from here. I can tell you that this is not going to be the end, but I

CHIEFS RALLY FROM PAGE 1A

Police chiefs seek compromise on MCOLES training standards

held throughout the state last year. Weeks spoke in opposition to the measure at the public hearing held January 12, 2007, at the State Library of Michigan in Lansing.

A typical full time officer will log 2,080 hours a year. MCOLES has chosen a quarter of that as the minimum standard for regular employment. Randolph said that translates to four days a month versus the current two days a month his part-time officers cover. According to Randolph and Weeks, Idaho is the only other state that requires regular employment standards, but they are much more reasonable at 120 hours per year. "The purpose of the hourly standard is that they don't want to see officers on the books and working a couple of days a year. We don't do that here, but we think 520 hours is extreme," Randolph said.

For the Clinton Police Department, the change will make filling full time officers' vacation and sick days difficult. Currently, the part-time staff in Clinton might work two days a month, Randolph said. "With the 520 hours we will have to schedule them four days or more

a month and it will cost the village money," he said. Weeks added that if his department didn't carry part-time officers to cover the extra hours it would be up to full time officers to fill the hours, which would levy additional costs on his agency for overtime. "Of all times to be implementing this, when we are facing the most difficult financial times," he said.

Weeks, who has three full time and five part-time officers, said that reducing staff will also cause a ripple effect for nearby departments that will have to cover calls when a department that relies on part-time staff to cover gaps can't do so. "It's not just agencies with part-time staff that it affects. It affects all of us," he said.

Tecumseh and Raisin Township are two such agencies that could be affected should departments like Clinton and Morenci lose the ability to use part-time officers. "It doesn't impact us directly," said Raisin Township Police Chief Scott Lambson, "but it does impact us indirectly. It's obvious if other departments can't cover their hours then we may be called in to help."

Area chiefs are hoping MCOLES will consider a com-

promise that would include training standards versus regular employment standards. "Some of us feel the minimum training standard would be one route to go," Randolph said. "Just because working 520 hours doesn't make a better officer. If we require the same training standard, or a combination of training and hours, then everyone is trained the same," said Randolph.

Weeks also noted that the 520-hour standard was originally proposed when Act 203 was passed in 1965 and that much has changed since then, including the establishing of police academies. "All the training was on-the-job training back then. We've come so far since 1965," he said, adding that a recent review of 28 applicants showed more than half the trained officers carrying a bachelor's degree. "We are talking about a profession. There's a lot that has changed from when they passed the standards to now when they are implementing them."

Randolph also noted that the state's municipal police force has dropped by 1,800 officers since the tragedies that occurred in New York City and at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. "This will definitely cause

us to lose more and state and county police would have to pick up the slack. Then they are taxed with having to do more with less," he said.

Clinton is one of five municipalities that has passed a resolution

supporting their department's efforts to halt the implementation of the regular employment standard. Hudson, Cambridge, Morenci and Cement City also have passed resolutions.

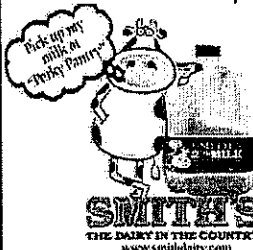
"The goal," said Weeks, "is to stop the implementation of the rule and come back to the table for further dialogue. We understand they want a standard. We support that. We just want something reasonable."

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